

URGENT ACTION

PROTESTER RISKS DECADES IN PRISON FOR T-SHIRT

Arbitrarily detained protester Mahmoud Hussein faces up to 25 years in prison simply for wearing a T-shirt with an anti-torture slogan back in January 2014. He was already arbitrarily detained from January 2014 to March 2016 in relation to the same case before being released on bail. Mahmoud Hussein was rearrested on August 30, 2023, and is currently detained at Badr 1 prison, pending trial in front of an emergency court over bogus terrorism-related and other charges. Prison authorities have been denying him access to adequate healthcare, including withholding medication he needs for his panic attacks, developed after he was subjected to torture and other ill-treatment. He must be immediately and unconditionally released as his detention is solely linked to the exercise of his human rights.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Second Urgent Action 90.23**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

Public Prosecutor Mohamed Shawky Ayyad
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Madinat al-Rehab; Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2577 4716;
Twitter: [@EgyptianPPO](#)

Egyptian Embassy in the United States
Ambassador Motaz Mounir Zahran
3521 International Court, NW,
Washington DC 20008
Phone: (202) 895-5400
Email: Embassy@egyptembassy.net

Dear counselor,

I write to express my concern over the prolonged arbitrary detention of protester, **Mahmoud Hussein**. Security forces arrested him at a checkpoint on August 30, 2023, and subjected him to enforced disappearance at facilities controlled by the National Security Agency (NSA) for five days. He was subsequently transferred to the prosecution, which ordered his detention pending trial on bogus charges of membership in a terrorist group, possession of explosive devices and Molotov cocktails, and incitement to violence, which, if convicted, carry a maximum prison sentence of 25 years. The next hearing is scheduled for April 23, 2024.

Mahmoud Hussein is currently detained in Badr 1 Prison, where Amnesty International has documented concerns regarding cruel and inhuman detention conditions and denial of adequate healthcare to prisoners. Prison authorities have failed to provide him with any mental health treatment and have withheld his prescribed medication for panic attacks, which developed during his previous incarceration, where he was subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.

I urge you to ensure Mahmoud Hussein's immediate and unconditional release as his detention stems solely from the exercise of his right to freedom of expression and drop all charges against him. Pending his release, he must be granted regular access to his family, lawyers, and adequate healthcare.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Security forces first arrested then 18-year-old **Mahmoud Hussein** on [January 25](#), 2014, in the aftermath of protests marking the 3rd anniversary of the “25 January Revolution”. Security forces stopped him at a checkpoint in the neighborhood of El-Marg, northern Cairo, when he was returning home on a bus from protests, and arbitrarily arrested him simply because he was wearing a T-shirt with the slogan “A Nation without Torture” and a scarf with the emblem of the January 25 Revolution. Amnesty International [documented](#) how, following his arrest in 2014, National Security Agency (NSA) officials subjected him to [torture](#) and other ill-treatment, including beatings and the use of electric shocks to his hands, back and testicles. As a result of the torture, he was forced to “confess” to belonging to a banned group, possessing Molotov cocktails and hand grenades, and participating in unauthorized protests, with his forced “confession” recorded on video. The day after he “confessed” on camera, Mahmoud Hussein was taken for questioning by the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP). He denied all the accusations and said he had been tortured to “confess”, but the prosecutor did not refer him for forensic examination or order any investigation into his torture allegations. Mahmoud Hussein stayed in El-Marg police station for six days and was later transferred to Abu Zaabal Prison where he was beaten upon arrival. In May 2014, he was transferred to Cairo’s Tora Appeal Prison, where he was also subjected to beatings on at least two occasions. He was eventually transferred to Cairo’s Tora Investigations Prison. He remained in pretrial detention under case number 715 of 2014 in El-Marg and was referred for trial on January 31, 2016. On March 24, 2016, he was released on bail of 1,000 Egyptian pounds. The torture and other ill-treatment to which he was subjected left him with chronic health concerns. After being released from prison, Mahmoud Hussein developed a dependency on a crutch for walking and had two hip replacement surgeries.

Mahmoud Hussein is currently held in [Badr 1 Prison](#), where prisoners complain of cruel and inhuman conditions characterized by the deliberate denial of healthcare, exposure to extreme cold, and constant camera surveillance. Family visits are allowed once a month for 20 minutes and are conducted through a glass barrier preventing physical contact with loved ones. This is in breach of Egypt’s prison regulations that stipulate weekly visits lasting at least 45 minutes for detainees in pretrial detention.

Mahmoud Hussein is among the thousands of individuals arbitrarily detained in Egypt solely for exercising their human rights or following proceedings violating fair trial rights or without legal basis. Those held include human rights defenders, political activists, members of opposition parties, trade unionists, workers, peaceful protesters, journalists, lawyers, social media influencers, members of religious minorities, and medical professionals.

Following his release from detention in 2016, Mahmoud Hussein tried to rebuild his life, opening a small business to produce T-Shirts, and had recently proposed to his girlfriend. He had also undergone medical treatment and was getting counseling.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic, English, or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: May 13, 2024

NAME AND PRONOUN: Mahmoud Hussein (He/him).

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/7223/2023/en/>